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Vitalism as a Bridge to Psychical Research

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In spite of the enormous amount of evidential material, Psychical Research is still far from being universally recognized as a "science". The reason for this deplorable state of affairs is, in the final analysis, of a philosophical nature: the results of Psychical Research, so people used to say, cannot be true, because, if they were, there would be a gap in the universal mechanism of nature. And this universal mechanism of nature is regarded as a finally established fact, as a *noli me tangere.*

Now, our theoretical adversaries are quite right in saying that, if the mechanistic or materialistic conception of nature were beyond doubt, phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance, premonition, etc. would, in fact, be impossible; all so-called facts discovered on the grounds of "parapsychology" would *not* be paranormal "facts" but would have to be reduced to coincidence by chance, to trickery, swindle, etc. Such a reduction might be very difficult, very improbable in many cases; but it would be unavoidable if the mate-

rialistic conception of the universe were a doctrine definitely established once and for all.

But is materialism and mechanism such a doctrine? Is it not a mere dogma lacking any sort of empirical or philosophical foundation? If this could be shown to be true, a great obstacle for the acceptance of Psychical Research as a sound and real science would have been removed; the paranormal though abnormal and rare, would have been proved not to be in contradiction to logical necessities.

I have devoted about fifty years of my scientific life to the problem, if, in fact, all events in the realm of what is generally called *nature,* are of the mechanistic or materialistic type, and I have been able to prove, so I hope, that already in a certain field of *normal* phenomena the mechanistic dogma is breaking down.

This field of events is the sphere of organic life, as studied by the science of Biology.

In order to understand this, let us in the first place formulate our problem as clearly and briefly as possible. What does so-called mechanism or materialism intend to say? The advocates of this doctrine tell us that all events in nature, inorganic as well as organic, are explainable and understandable on the foundations of an interaction among the ultimate elements of matter and by the resultant efforts of such an interaction according to the principle of the so-called parallelogram of forces. It is of no importance which kind of a theory of matter you may accept, and it is also indifferent for our purpose whether you adhere to so-called classical mechanics, as established by Galileo, Newton and Lagrange, or accept one of the various forms of mechanics, as established in our day. The main character of mechanism or materialism in the philosophical sense of the word is only this: Can *all* events in nature be explained by single actions between single ultimate elements, and the resultants of such actions, or are there perhaps certain events in the face of which such an explanation is impossible?

According to the mechanistic or materialistic doctrine, the particular feature of a certain event or a certain group of events would ultimately rest upon a particular *structure* of matter which must be taken as it is. Given this material structure, i. e. the arrangement of the material elements, and given the ultimate law of interaction between these elements, everything, so mechanism teaches us, is fully explained and understood.

But now I have shown that at least in certain fields of biological phenomena the existence of such a given material structure is an impossibility.

As it is impossible to explain here the details of my anti-mechanistic arguments, I must refer my readers to my "Gifford Lectures", *The Science and Philosophy of the Organism,* where they will find these arguments in full. In this article I shall only describe the general scheme of my reasoning.

The first of the biological spheres, in which the introduction of the concept of a material structure as the foundation of all that happens proves to be impossible, is the building of individual form, *morphogenesis,* in particular embryology and regeneration.

When I separated the first two or the first four cleavage cells of the egg of a sea urchin from one another, I got two or four complete organisms; fusion of two eggs gave one organism,—a giant; in the stage of eight cells I could change the relative position of the cells with regard to one another without damaging the normal result; in the stage of about one thousand cells I could remove as many cells as I liked and where I liked, and yet a normal larva was the result. The same is true with respect to the regeneration of many lower organisms: cut a Clavellina (an Ascidian) or a Planaria (a worm) into as many pieces as you like, each piece will remodel itself into a small complete organism in the course of a few days.

All these experiments prove the impossibility of the existence of a preformed material structure, a morphogenetic

machine, as we might say. *For a "machine" does not remain what it has been if you remove any part you like and where you like, or if you change the relations of its parts as you like.* Note well the words, *"as you like"*, in this connection!

Structural preformation, therefore, cannot be the foundation of morphogenesis. On what, then, does morphogenesis depend? The answer is: on a certain immaterial agent which has the power of ordering—of *whole-making.*

But this means the introduction of the doctrine which is generally called *Vitalism.*

But Vitalism can also be established in still another field of biological phenomena, in the field of organic movement, of human action in particular; and here, it is the phenomena of memory and of understanding which render any sort of mechanistic explanation absolutely impossible. It would be absurd to connect memory with any kind of material constellation or structure, as I have fully explained in my book, *Alltagsrätsel des Seelenslebens.* And the same is true with respect to understanding. Think of a conversation between two human beings: Air vibrations, coming from the mouth of A affect the ear of B; B answers to this stimulus and thus affects the ear of A, etc. But the stimuli in question do not act *quâ* physical stimuli, but as far as they possess "meaning". The air vibrations corresponding to the words, "my father is ill," "mon père est malade", "mein Vater ist krank", are fundamentally different quâ physical events, but their *meaning* is the same. And, on the other hand, if the system of air vibration has been changed very slightly, if instead of "mon", "ton" has been pronounced, instead of "mein", "dein", the effect of the stimulation may vary to quite an enormous extent.

The anti-mechanistic argument based upon the analysis of human action is not only of biological, but also of psychological, importance; it defeats so-called *psycho-physical parallelism* definitely. The doctrine of this parallelism, going back ultimately to the philosophy of Spinoza, states, as you

know, that mental life is "the same" as the mechanics of the brain; in other words, that mental life is an epi-phenomenon of brain mechanics. But our argumentation has shown that there is no "brain mechanics" or, to put it better, that the mechanics of the brain does not explain what happens when a human being acts. For this reason there cannot be any kind of parallelism between mechanics and mental life. They are not "the same" seen from two different angles, but the one is the one, and the other the other; and the one acts upon the other. Thus the theory of parallelism has to give place to the theory of interaction between mind and body.

The main result of our explanations, then, is the following: The organism is not a mechanical system. Certainly it consists of matter — but it also consists of something else, which guides and directs matter. I have called this something, *Entelechy*. You may also call it mind or soul, in particular in the field of action. Soul or mind, then, is a separate being, an *Ens* for itself.

Does not this result form a bridge, as it were, from the normal to the paranormal? In any case it shows that already in the sphere of normality the mechanistic or materialistic point of view breaks down completely, as far as organic life is concerned.

You may say that telepathy, clairvoyance, premonition are "wonders", but normal human action, or say, even biological morphogenesis, are "wonders" also. I should prefer, however, to avoid the word "wonder" in both cases, for no wonders in the strict sense of the theologians stand in question but phenomena subjected to causal laws. Let us say that already in the field of normal events we do find non-mechanical forms of causality. Why shouldn't there be still some other such forms which in our day we are beginning to discover? In this way Psychical Research is getting logical legitimation as a science — the most important science of all.

A Complex Case of Haunting

BY RENÉ JOHANNET

The question of haunting is certainly the most mysterious of all the problems encountered by psychic researchers. One must rely—and there is very little ground—on descriptions, definitions and on second-hand accounts of phenomena. It would be an exaggeration to say that little progress has been made. It is possible, for example, to isolate certain groups of facts; in such groups are the poltergeists and among these the rain of stones. It is also possible to establish definitely the character of certain manifestations, to attach others to an apparent cause; namely, a crime or a suicide. However, this is very little when one reflects upon it.

It is difficult to go far in this field as the ground is not yet sure enough, or clear enough. There would be, in my opinion, a great advantage in distinguishing more clearly than has been done between the hauntings that without question emanate from the presence of a certain individual and those that are directly connected to an apartment, house or some specified place . . . a forest, a crossroads, a bridge, alley and so forth.

Real hauntings are those that manifest themselves at regular or irregular intervals, but persist in a given place. However, the manner in which these manifestations take place does not eliminate the confusion that arises between real hauntings and similar phenomena attributable to some living person.

It is a well-known fact that in the case of a hereditarily haunted house, if I may use such a definition, everybody is not similarly "favored". Certain people see nothing and others perceive only that part of the whole picture to which they are sensitive. Among these last there are certain ones

who play the role of stimulators or catalyzers. If they depart, nothing will be visible until a newcomer will once more succeed in arousing the phenomena. Another reason for perplexity and confusion is the fact that localized and regular hauntings do not always manifest themselves in the same way.

A young couple spent the night in an English castle well known to be haunted by the sounds of steps, groans, and the ringing of bells. They took the precaution, before they went to bed, of locking the door and piling up behind it all the movable pieces of furniture in the room. They were not bothered by any sounds during the night but when they awoke, they found the door open and all the furniture back in place.

I am repeating this elementary knowledge because the incidents that I am about to set forth are dependent on one of the complex cases where the seat of the haunting is at the same time in a house and in a living person. These two factors unite to enrich the phenomena.

I must say first that the person who, at my request, has written the detailed account of what she observed during the course of a long period of haunting, as tenacious as they were varied and scattered, is still alive. She lives sometimes in Paris and sometimes in the provinces. She is a woman of about fifty, very intelligent and cultured. She is of the Roman Catholic faith, but has a very great freedom of thought and spirit. Gifted with a very developed critical sense, having read, observed, studied and traveled, she belongs by birth to a high social milieu. She is, besides all this, the sister of a philosopher, well-known in university centers, and she herself has written. She has a gay and intentionally malicious wit and is in no way occupied by mysticism, if by mysticism one means something vague and exalted, more related to inspiration and dream, than to dogmatic religion and discursive philosophy. The disturbances to which she was exposed began when she was about twenty and continued during a few successive years,

constituting a unique experience in her life. Nothing similar has ever happened to her either before or afterwards, nor to any of the members of her large family.

The other feminine personality, who appears in these incidents, is the Marquise de P—, a great beauty, who is now dead. She seems to have been gifted with great psychic powers mixed with a strong inner inspiration. Formerly very worldly and smart, she had a great influence on the people about her. She became converted at the death of her husband, and this is where the story begins.

The events took place in an isolated peasant's house in the Limousin district, and in an old convent in the town of M— in the Province of Quercy (before the arrival of the recorder this place had been the scene of many phenomena which will be mentioned later).

The Marquise de P— was invited by the parents of the recorder to visit them shortly after the death of her husband, in order to help her over the first shock of her grief. She stayed for a month and everyone was struck by the change that had come over her. She suddenly took up a life of meditation and austerity. This was in 1904. In 1901 Parliament voted a series of laws preventing the religious orders from teaching. This left many free schools in suspension. Madame de P— decided to do what she could to ameliorate the situation and obtained with great difficulty the help of Mademoiselle X, who is the narrator of the following incidents:

My family had settled themselves at Montpelier for the winter. After many hesitations and with an unexplainable distaste I finally made my decision. This was about the end of November. One night after dinner, I wrote to Madame de P— to tell her that, having overcome my reluctance I would help her with her work and would arrive in T— about the seventh of December. While I was writing this letter, a frightful smell of sulphur and rotten eggs surrounded me. A moment later one of my sisters came into my room and cried:

"Oh what a bad smell! What in the world could cause such an awful smell? Something must be burning."

"Nothing is burning," I answered.

"It isn't possible, there must be a fire," cried my sister with such a frightened look that I was seized with an absurd fear and ran out of the room with her.

The eve of my departure (my father was in Nice at the time) my mother said to me:

"You shall not leave tomorrow, I was too frightened last night."

"Frightened by what, mother?"

"I was wakened (she slept on the ground floor) by a very violent bang on the shutters. I thought that it was an attack of burglars and I was not able to go back to sleep again. Wait for the return of your father. Do not go away now."

Mademoiselle X— refused, feeling that she must keep to her decision. The school year at T— passed without incident. At the beginning of the next term Madame de P— left for M—, where she took charge of an educational institution that was failing, placing Mademoiselle X— at the head of the school in her stead. Mademoiselle X— was terrified by the idea of this responsibility, feeling herself to be much too young and inexperienced.

I cried but I forced myself to do it. I disliked the job so much that I cried on my way to make my official visits to the various authorities of M—. Two days before the beginning of the term Madame de P— came to M— with the former head of the school, Mademoiselle V—, and one of the other members of the staff, Mademoiselle S. About nine o'clock that night all three of them were walking towards the school which was an old house previously occupied by the nuns of the Holy Family. During the eighteenth century it had been occupied by the Carmelites.

Mademoiselle V— opened the big door on the boulevard and then after crossing a small vestibule, opened the large double door which gave access to the large central hall. At the moment that she opened this door a terrific explosion rocked the house, just like a bursting bomb, and they saw in the middle of the hall a large red glow, in the center of which danced a black shadow. All this faded away in an instant. Terrified, these ladies went to the primary school which was in charge of secularized nuns and asked there for shelter for the night.

The next day I arrived with Madame F—, a young widow, twelve

years my senior who had recently joined our work. No one told us of the dramatic occurrence of the day before. Two others, Mademoiselle R— and Mademoiselle M— also arrived the same day as ourselves. They must have been paid as they were not members of our group.

We formed the habit of correcting our pupils' work in the evening all together in the study, which was also the office I used as head mistress. There was a sixth teacher who slept in the town with an aunt. She was very silent and spoke to us only about routine matters. Far from being depressed and frightened, we were all five of us extremely gay. Madame F— had a terrible temper and oppressed me with her complaints, scenes, and outbursts but she was also very amusing.

"Petite Madamette", Mademoiselle R— used to say (The Marquise de P— insisted that I should be called Madame la Directrice in order to give my youthful appearance more weight), "I am patient with my pupils all day in anticipation of the gay and pleasant evenings we spend together."

Once our corrections were done Mademoiselle R— knitted, Mademoiselle M— tatted, Mademoiselle D— embroidered, and Madame F— worked in metal or tin with a true artistic flair. I attended to my correspondence and when that was finished I would read out loud with many comments and interruptions.

The study was on the second floor. On the ground floor the hall faced at one end on the boulevard and the other end opened on the court which was used for the recreation period. A heavy old door opened on this court which was bolted at night by an enormous iron bar. When this door turned on its hinges the noise was so loud that it echoed throughout the house.

One night, while I was reading, the door opened with the low grumbling sound which was so disagreeable and unmistakable. Probably Madeleine (our old servant) is taking a turn before going to bed, I thought. Five minutes later there was another rumbling sound.

"Madeleine is restless tonight," said Mademoiselle D—. I started reading again; there was another loud rumble.

"That woman is really a nuisance," cried Madame F—. "I am going to scold her a bit."

Soon she came back with a worried look.

"That's too much," she declared. "The iron bar is in place on the door and I went up to Madeleine's room and found her sound asleep. What does it mean?"

While she was talking the rumbling started again. We all pelted down the stairs. The door was closed and the iron bar seemed to mock us. We went upstairs again and hardly had we got to the landing when, downstairs quite near, but out of sight, the sinister and irritating noise began again. We sat down on the first step of the stairs facing the door. There was dead silence. We went back to the study and the noise started up again. After going back and forth about ten times we went to bed, very angry that we had discovered nothing.

From that day on some of our evenings were quiet and some were filled at intervals by the strange noise. Sometimes two or three of us would settle ourselves in front of the bewitched door. The others would stay in the study. As long as the sentinels were there, there would be no more noise but as soon as they wearied and returned upstairs the dreary noise would begin again.

I remember one night the manifestation of this haunting changed. I was reading Rostand's *l'Aiglon* out loud. The shutters of all the windows began to bang back and forth. There was no wind. We went together and examined all the windows. Each shutter was securely fastened. I began my reading again but once more the uproar began. It lasted for such a long time and was so violent that our courage was dissolved and we did not dare to go to bed. We spent part of the night in the study depressed by an uneasiness much greater than any we had felt before.

At the end of two years I decided to get an outside witness. I went and told all that had happened to a lawyer at M—, Monsieur C—, whose two daughters had been educated at our school. He came with his wife but we heard nothing that evening. He returned a few days later. The noise started immediately at very short intervals. And suddenly Monsieur C—, stocky and fat, began to jump around the studio waving his cane and darting it at an invisible adversary, shouting:

"Vade retro Satanas! Vade retro Satanas!"

Then our protector, a man used to arguments, tried to move Satan in the same manner as he would a recalcitrant jury.

"Out, out, iniquitous monster. Flee Lucifer and leave in peace these pure women, these innocent virgins, these superior beings, who want to keep their pupils' souls from you. I order you to stop these odious persecutions. *Vade retro Satanas!*"

We were literally rocking with laughter and no longer knew where to look. We were laughing openly right in front of the good man, who was so excited and beside himself that he took no heed.

Having the opportunity to see Mademoiselle V—, the former headmistress (a person of forty years of age or more), I spoke to her about the strange noises that bothered us. She did not seem at all surprised.

"I had my share of them," she said calmly, "not the same noises but others just as disagreeable. I used to have about twenty logs piled one on top of the other on the landing near the study. Several times while I was in the study I heard these logs roll out on the landing as if someone was playing with them. I opened the door. The logs were there perfectly piled up. When I closed the door again, the logs rolled down with a great noise, and when I looked there they were in order. I paid no more attention to it. At other times the noise would be in the empty study hall. The lids of the desks would open and close with a terrific bang, one by one and row by row as if lifted by an electric hand with extraordinary rapidity."

Here are some further incidents:

One evening about six, I was alone in the study. Mademoiselle R— came in looking quite pale. She was a plump good-humored person (in spite of being lame) and was very gay and intelligent.

"Petite Madamette, come quickly," she cried, "I was correcting my exercise books in my class room. The next class room to mine was empty and yet I heard sounds of sobs and moans coming from it. I went to see what it was and there was no one there. Come and listen."

I went with her but heard nothing. We searched the room without finding anything. But it seems that as soon as I left, the sobs and moans began again. Another evening, Madame F— came into the study about seven o'clock. She looked very upset and said:

"Listen to what has just happened to me. I was coming down from my class room (which was on the second floor) when I felt an icy hand on my cheek. I can still feel the cold that came from those marble fingers."

The next morning there was a telegram for her announcing the death of her uncle the evening before at seven o'clock.

We had said nothing of all this to our old servant. I was satisfied with her work and was afraid if she heard of these unusual occurrences that she would leave. One morning while serving our breakfast she said to me:

"Why did Madame la Directrice come to my room last night?"

"I did not budge last night, Madeleine."

"It is strange," replied the servant. "I was not asleep. My door

opened slowly and someone who walked like you, made a tour of the room. I could hear the sound of the rustling of her dress against the furniture. She leaned over me and I felt her breath on me. Then the rustling of her dress crossed the room and I did not hear the closing of the door."

"And this morning, was your door open?"

"No, it was securely closed."

Time went by, Mademoiselle — was dismissed for disobedience. This made us one less and our work was increased.

One evening I was alone in the study quite late correcting and marking examination papers. About midnight there was a loud, sharp knock at the window pane. I had forgotten to close the shutters. The night was very dark, without a moon. Perhaps it was a night bird; but if that were the case the blow would have been duller and would not have had that strident resonant note in the still night

I got up and went upstairs to bed. The room which I shared with Madame F— on the second floor was all lined with cupboards, with heavy wooden doors similar to those found in the sacristies of convents. I entered the room quietly and got undressed. My roommate was asleep. All of a sudden there was a violent bang on the inside of the cupboard. The cupboards shook and Madame F— woke up with a start. I searched the cupboards in every direction and except for the dresses hanging there, they were quite empty.

Soon afterwards, I was again working late in the study alone. It was about midnight when I went to bed. I was getting undressed when I heard someone coming upstairs from the ground floor to the first floor very cautiously. I knew that at the top of this flight of stairs there were two creaking steps and sure enough the steps creaked ominously under the footsteps of the strange nocturnal visitor. I noticed Madame F—sitting up in bed with a worried look on her face.

"Did you hear that?" she said.

"Yes."

And putting on my wrapper I walked to the door. Lowering her commanding voice Madame F— said to me:

"Where are you going, naughty girl, I forbid you to leave this room."

"Why, I want to know what it is."

She jumped out of bed and pushed me aside roughly, double locked the door and taking the key with her, knelt down at her bed.

"Recite your act of penitence, you poor foolish girl," she whispered. "Don't you understand if the burglar comes as far as this room he will kill us in a second."

I burst out laughing seeing her kneeling there in her nightgown with her frightened face. She shrugged her shoulders with infinite pity, once more dismayed by my extreme youth. But I became suddenly serious. The door of the study which was directly under our room had just been opened. Madame F— groaned feebly:

"This is the end! I left all the money of the house in the drawer of the desk. We will be without a cent for the next three months."

I began to grieve also:

"Oh! and I forgot my pretty gold watch on top of a pile of papers. Now that is lost."

We listened again. What a strange burglar; instead of trying to work quietly we heard him seize the desk and drag it across the room making a loud scraping noise. Absolute silence followed. The burglar must have disappeared without as much noise as a shadow. No creaking sounds betrayed his flight. At dawn I wanted to rush downstairs to the study. Madame F— considered that this curiosity was highly imprudent. Suppose the burglar was still there? I paid no attention to her and she followed me muttering that she did not want me to die alone.

In the quiet study everything was in order. My desk was still in the same place and my little watch was shining on top of the pile of papers, and the money was all intact in Madame F—'s drawer.

At breakfast that morning healthy and rosy looking R— was so pale that I asked her:

"Are you sick?" Her expression became reticent.

"No, I am quite well, thank you."

"You are eating nothing; tell me if you are ill."

"I prefer not to say what is the matter with me."

"It is not nice of you to treat us like strangers."

"You must tell us what is bothering you," ordered Madame F—.

"Well, then, it's too bad if it worries you. Last night I thought that I would die of fright (her room was on the same landing as the studio). I heard someone come upstairs, go into the studio and shake your desk. I thought surely that they would come and kill me — all your valuables must have been stolen."

It was quite evident that Madame F— and I, with such different

characters, and poor little R— on another floor all by herself could not have imagined the incident. But what was it?

The narration of these hauntings will bring forth much discussion. Nothing is explained and with the knowledge we have at present, one wonders whether part of this phenomena is not due to some psychic repression on the part of the recorder or that of Madame P—. The former has not hidden the distaste which she had to overcome in order to lead a life which she disliked intensely. As for the latter, she was a widow, still young, who had suddenly ceased to lead a life she enjoyed and had taken up one of an entirely different sort. The phenomena of bad smells and frightening knocks might have been a way of bringing them back to their former life. It might have been an unconscious defense of the organism, a sort of play or comedy invented by the subconscious in order to obtain a respite and a change of life. But this interpretation is so fraught with difficulties that one is definitely inclined to turn to a spiritistic hypothesis. It would seem in any case that the personality of the Marquise de P—, a beautiful, strong-willed, fervent and unsatisfied person, constituted the dominating force of these complex phenomena, many of which occurred during her absence but not without connection with her "being". They followed her willingly, though free to continue after she had left.

This is evidenced by what took place in a small house that Madame de P— had rented in the Limousin district where she went with six of her girls, among whom was Mademoiselle X— who will once more tell us what happened. The story begins with the make-shift arranging of the cottage.

To begin with we changed the Marquise de P—'s room into a pretty little chapel. There were no stories, just a big attic that ran the length of the house. On the ground floor there was a living room, dining room, kitchen, all of them small rooms. We made a studio out of an old room where we gathered all our work together, costumes, paints, scenery, etc. We made a dormitory out of the

attic, by a very ingenious method. In the middle a large tent sheltered our six iron beds; at the far end the Marquise had a tent by herself and at the other end, another tent enclosed our six wash basins. The attic looked exactly like an encampment of Indians or boy scouts.

In this strange little house the w.c.'s were conveniently located at the far end of the cellar. In the entrance hall on the bottom floor a door opened on the stairs leading into the cellar which was large and ran under the entire house. The stairs were so steep and narrow and at such an acute angle that they resembled a wooden ladder more than a stairway. The cellar opposite the stairs opened on a sloping garden behind the house. One night I got up, lit a lantern (there was no electricity in the cellar) and went down the two flights of stairs to the cellar. I was about to leave the place which shall be nameless when I heard right next to me some violent blows, made by a club or a pair of horns. I thought that it might be a goat that had jumped the hedge into the garden and had entered the cellar and been locked up unknowingly. The blows began again more violently than ever. I hesitated. I was perfectly willing to fight a goat but had no intention or desire to encounter a thief. And yet I could not spend the night in that "buen retiro". I went out. I swung the flickering light of my lantern on all sides: There seemed to be nothing suspicious when bang!—a terrific blow struck in the darkness at my left made me jump. I lit up the spot with my lantern. There was nothing. Another terrific blow on my right. I steered my light in that direction—nothing. I started walking and at almost every step a blow accompanied me; hardly guided by my faltering light, I was in a panic. I finally reached the steep stairs. Keeping time with me, as I walked up them, bang, bang—under my feet on the opposite side of the rung—at each step there was a blow as of tusks—all the way to the top. With great relief I closed the door of that cursed cellar stairway, and started up the one leading to the attic. When I arrived upstairs what did I find? Every one up and in a great state of excitement. They were huddled around the Marquise de P—, in their nightgowns and wrappers, barefooted and with rumpled hair. I was welcomed by glad cries.

Finally they explained to me that the echoing blows which had filled the cellar had been heard as far as the attic and had woken them all up. Seeing my empty bed and surmising where I was they had all imagined that I had been murdered, raped, or that some equally pleasant fate had befallen me. The amusing part was that no one had thought of coming down stairs, or had dared.

The following year the Marquise came alone to spend a few

weeks at the cottage. She had given up her work. While she was alone in the cottage she heard nothing strange. The Marquise asked an old farmer if he would be so kind as to sleep in the house during her visit. At the end of a week the man came to the Marquise and said:

"I hope that Madame la Marquise will forgive me, but I am leaving. I will not stay in this house. Unnatural things are happening here. Every night some one walks the length of the hall. They go back and forth in front of my door. I open the door and there is no one, and then it recommences in the corridor. I will not stay here any longer."

She tried to insist but he was obstinate and finally left. Later she rented the house and her tenants never complained, at least not to my knowledge.

Here I have to retrace my steps to be able to relate what happened in the same cottage in the month of May, 1904, a very short time before the Marquise de P— invited me to spend a month there with her. She did not tell me this episode until one or two years later.

After she had spent a large part of the year in Limousin without servants, as her small house was quite lonely and isolated, she asked a young couple to sleep in her house to protect her.

Having conceived of the idea of her project during the solitary weeks she had spent at the cottage she settled herself one evening in the living room to write—to draw up the plan of her future organization. It is necessary here to give a short description of the plan of her cottage. The bottom floor was very simple and about two steps off the ground—no second story. A hall divided the house in two. On the right as one entered there was the room occupied by the young couple, then the door opening on the stairway leading to the attic (which ran the length of the house without gables). Then on the same side came the Marquise's room. On the left opposite the young couple's room was the kitchen and opposite the attic door was the dining room and in the rear opposite the entrance was the sitting room.

About ten o'clock an inexplicable noise shattered the silence. Madame de P— stopped writing. Behind the attic door, strong claws were scraping the door from top to bottom. On the bottom step, there was always a bucket of fresh water with a ladle in it. As soon as the claws stopped their noise a hand seemed to lift the ladle and let it fall back into the pail noisily. Then the claws would begin their scraping again, furiously. Then an enormous weight, comparable to the bulk of a horse, fell from the top of the attic

stairs to the bottom, and fell against the door which cracked and rattled. The noise was terrific.

At the end of an hour, not being able to stand it any longer the Marquise, frozen with fright, went and knocked on the door of the young couple's room. These good people were so terrified that they had been unable to go to bed. All three of them listened to the noise, which continued for more than an hour. Finally about midnight the noise subsided, but no one dared to go to bed. The Marquise did not return to her room until dawn.

A Jesuit father (who died in 1915) was at that time preaching at the church of Sainte Eulalie. He was the Marquise's father confessor. She went and told him everything and the good father who was gifted with exorcising powers, came to exorcise the cottage. He was robed in his stole and surplice and had his holy-water sprinkler in his hand. He had just finished the prayers and ritual, and was sprinkling the attic door with holy water when a frightful smell of burning sulphur and filth filled the hall. It was so suffocating that the good father and his penitent were obliged to flee into the garden.

This was about the same time that Mademoiselle X—, the recorder, had smelled the same awful odor at Montpelier, more than fifty leagues away.

As our knowledge is so limited, it would be superfluous to pretend to furnish a serious explanation for these phenomena. All that I can attempt to do is to give you an exact record, set down by a person known to me and of an irreproachable character.

The expression, collective hallucination, really presents no explanation. The phenomena related here took place as if emanating from a central point. The question is where to seek that center. In the subconscious? In an order of paranormal or supernormal reality? Such suppositions must be considered.

This narrative reports nothing new in the way of manifestations. The noises of footsteps, of doors, of logs of wood, of shutters, of falling bodies, of claws that scratch, of objects which strike, of odors, of lights, all are catalogued in numerous earlier cases.

This narrative, while it teaches us nothing, confirms a great deal. In itself, it points to the possibility of a mysterious and independent presence. And like similar accounts it offers as a consideration the hypothesis of a dormant physico-physiological law.

Survey and Comment

In the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research (London) for March 1939, Mr. C. V. C. Herbert reports on the platform mediumship of Mrs. Helen Hughes. Some of the preliminary work for the study was done in collaboration with the London Spiritualist Alliance.

Mr. Herbert has been extremely fair and open-minded in his analysis of the material. While giving the clairvoyant every benefit of the doubt and expressing his belief in her absolute sincerity, he tackles the problem of leakage and the possibility of phenomenal memory in a straightforward way. Until every possible avenue of normal cognition has been blocked, it is useless to attempt to evaluate such phenomena and quite impossible to come to any definite conclusion. All but consciously fraudulent mediums would welcome such a fair and intelligent consideration of their gifts.

In a second paper on Mrs. Hughes' clairvoyance, Mrs. K. M. Goldney makes a report on an experiment. Mrs. Goldney had a very poor private sitting at which she was unable to recognize the names of any of the persons that Mrs. Hughes said wished to communicate. Toward the end of this sitting, Mrs. Goldney acknowledged a number of such purported communicators as recognizable, although in truth she had never heard of them. Her intention was to see if the same communicators would report again at some public demonstration. For some weeks, Mrs. Goldney attended the public meetings of Mrs. Hughes and spoke frequently to her in passing but never received a further message. Eighteen months later, the acknowledged communicators reappeared for Mrs. Goldney from Mrs. Hughes' platform.

Mrs. Goldney feels that her own deceit was justified because of the apparent light shed by this incident on subconscious memory. For Mrs. Goldney does not believe that the normal memory of an individual could retain the very large number of names (she estimates approximately 30,000 a year), that Mrs. Hughes gives out to her platform audiences, very frequently with perfect success.

Two interesting points are raised by Mrs. Goldney's report. The first is whether or not she is correct in supposing that there may not be especially good memories that can retain any quantity of names providing there is a connecting association such as the recognition of a face, etc. It is extraordinary how much can be retained by those with a *filing-cabinet* mind. It might be interesting for a group of people to keep a record for a short period of all information obtained concerning their most distant acquaintances plus the number of

times encountered, circumstances, etc. These records should be kept by the leader of the experiments and a short oral examination based on photographs of the subjects or objects, etc. given after a few years had elapsed.

The other question is whether or not it is wise or useful to mislead a medium even after a worthless sitting. That is, if the purpose of the sitting is to prove the presence of clairvoyance—not the lack of it. The problem is not so much an ethical one as a matter of technique. Clairvoyance, if it exists at any time in the mind of the medium, draws upon accomplished fact in its operation. Presumably the mind of the sitter and the surrounding atmosphere is as pregnant with fancy and desire as it is with memory. The clairvoyant faculty must discriminate between these varying thoughts if we are to recognize it as a faculty at all. It is therefore based upon the truths of accomplished fact. Its very nature prevents its operating upon a false foundation. In my opinion, it is therefore more justifiable to make a definite lead under such circumstances than to mislead, providing a most detailed and accurate record is kept for future comparison. The following incident is an example where a lead did not detract from the clairvoyant evidence:

Some months ago, I was discussing the possibility of a series of psychometric experiments with the well-known clairvoyant, Mr. Chester Grady. I have been particularly interested to find a medium who could receive impressions concerning the origin and surroundings of objects such as Dr. Pagenstecher's hypnotic subject did.* The more usual psychometric gift merely details the characteristics and circumstances of the successive owners. Mr. Grady said he would be willing to try and I then and there took from my desk a piece of Chinese writing (an ancient bill for coal), sealed it in an envelope and handed it to him. I hoped that he would receive some impression of China or the Chinese. The conversation was as follows:

This belonged to someone who is still alive.

The last owner of the writing was dead so I checked it off as error No. 1 and replied:

No. She is dead.

I had purposely corrected his error and given away the sex of the person in question.

She is worried about someone living—I think her husband—who is in financial difficulties. His name has six letters.

This might well be true. Her husband has six letters in his Christian name. But then who isn't in financial difficulties!

*A. S. P. R. Proceedings—Vol. XVI.—1922.

This object has very upsetting vibrations about it. It is the kind of thing I don't like to handle. In fact, the owner of this committed suicide by shooting herself through the head.

Now, this last statement was absolutely true and there was nothing vague about it. It is not the kind of statement that might apply to a number of people. Nor did my slight lead take away from my conviction that this was indeed true clairvoyance. The paper had come out of a Chinese box which had been given me by the lady in question. This lady lived and died in a foreign country and the mode of her death was only known to a few people. It was known, of course, to me at the time though I was expecting quite different impressions from the scrap of Chinese paper. The box and the paper it contained were not close to the lady's person as a piece of jewelry might have been nor was it in the house where the tragedy took place. Had the death of this lady been known by Mr. Grady and associated with me—a circumstance I am satisfied was impossible—there is no way by which he could have known that the scrap of paper formed a link between us.

* * *

Cardinal Pacelli's choice of Pius XII as his pontifical name after his election as Pope in March, must have been a disappointment to many familiar with the papal prophecies of St. Malachy and the monk of Padua. The pontifical names for each pope were added by the unknown monk to St. Malachy's much earlier predictions and according to them, Cardinal Pacelli should have taken the name, Gregory XVII. The history of the predictions is as follows:

St. Malachy, otherwise known as Maol-Maodhog Ua Morgair, Archbishop of Armagh and papal legate to Ireland, was born in 1094 and died in 1148. He was an intimate friend of St. Bernard whom he met at Clairvaux on his way to Rome to apply for the Pallium, the token of archiepiscopal subjection to Rome, from Pope Innocent II. The Pope received him well and made him papal legate to Ireland but refused him the Pallium until a council of bishops, clergy and noblemen should apply for it unanimously. On his return journey, he took four Cistercian monks with him who founded the first Cistercian monastery in Ireland, Mellifont, in County Louth. He was a man of great organizing ability and according to St. Bernard, who wrote a life of him, he not only made prophecies but performed miracles as well. He was canonized by Clement III in 1190. St. Bernard's *Life* and two sermons on St. Malachy can be found in a book entitled *Patrologia Latina* by J. P. Migne.

St. Malachy is chiefly renowned, however, for a work attributed to him called *Prophecy concerning the Future of the Roman Pontiffs,*

in which a latin motto is given, descriptive of the person and reign of each successive pope up to the number of one hundred and eleven. Only eleven remain for the twentieth century, four of whom have already reigned.

These devices were commented upon by the monk of Padua who had the audacity to add the pontifical names. It is probable that the monk is more responsible for the prophecies than Saint Malachy. In fact, the work, *Prophecies concerning the Future of the Roman Pontiffs,* is generally considered by authorities to be a forgery dating from 1590 and written to support the election of Cardinal Simoncelli to the Papal Chair.

Whether St. Malachy or the monk of Padua is the true author of the devices, their age is sufficiently authenticated to make them valuable as prognostications. There are disappointing errors but a number of the names and devices are correct and indicate a genuine gift of prophecy.

The Popes given for the twentieth century are as follows:

LUMEN IN COELO: *The Dawn returns. Hail, Light of the sky! Long live Leo XIII.*

Leo XIII, who died in 1903, was the 257th Successor of Saint Peter. It was he who made the remarkable concession that the Vatican Archives and Library might be placed at the disposal of persons qualified to compile manuals of history. He believed that the church would not suffer from the publication of its documents. He founded an academy in the name of St. Thomas Aquinas and urged the study of church history. He prepared and wrote encyclicals on human liberty and the condition of the working classes. His point of view on this latter subject was slightly tinged with modern socialism. He might, indeed, be called the messenger of a new enlightenment.

IGNIS ARDENS: *He will govern—the ardent fire—father of the people of Rome. Glory forever to our Seigneur Pius X.*

Pius X succeeded Leo XIII in 1903. He was simple and popular because of his willingness to act in harmony with the Italian Government. He was not otherwise outstanding.

RELIGIO DEPOPULATA: *Then will be seen the decrease of Christianity and the very cruel race of Satan. Our very Sainted Father Paul VI.*

This pope is misnamed in the prophecy. He was Benedictus XV and not Paul VI. The error is reassuring to enthusiasts, critics having suggested that the popes, motivated by superstition, purposely chose the prognosticated names. As this pope's reign is co-incident with

the period of the World War, it is not in error to signify it as decreased in Christianity and strengthened in the hordes of Satan.

FIDES INTREPIDA: *Here will be seen the intrepid faith and the fetid sacrifice. Holy Victory is sure. Our Sainted Father Pius XI. King in Italy. What faith the Holy City has in his merits.*

Pius XI was both a practical and a spiritual man. It was he who freed the Pontiffs from their self-enforced imprisonment in the Vatican and created the independent temporal power of Vatican City, by the *Accord of the Lateran.* The prophecy is accurate in describing him as a King in Italy.

PASTOR ANGELICUS: *You are the Angelic Pastor of Rome. Oh, beneficent doctor, Oh, Indulgent Father. Hail, Gregoire XVII. Very Holy Father, and Necessary Pastor.*

It was conceivable that Cardinal Pacelli might have chosen the name of Gregoire XVII because the last Pope Gregory was the sixteenth. If the prophecies originated in 1590 or even much later, it is still remarkable that the name should have been a possible choice. There was no normal way of determining at that time how many popes would take the name before the twentieth century. Gregory XIII reigned from 1572 until 1585, Gregory the XIV reigned only two years (1590 and 1591). Gregory XV succeeded Paul V in 1621 and died in 1623 and Gregory XVI reigned from 1831 to 1846. There has been no Pope Gregory since that time. The choice of Pius XII by Cardinal Pacelli throws out a later prophecy. *Pastor Necessaire* may well prove an adequate description of the present pope.

Then are named six more popes. Paul VII—necessarily an error as Benedictus XV has already been incorrectly named Paul VI. Clement XV—a possible choice because the last Clement (pope from 1769 to 1774) was the fourteenth of that name. Pius XII—another error since the present pope is Pius XII. Gregory XVIII—who must be Gregory XVII if the name of Gregory is chosen. Leo XIV and Peter the Roman, the last Pontiff.

It must be remembered that the Latin devices are credited to Saint Malachy and may be more accurate if less specific than the names added by the Paduan monk. The comment made for Petrus Romanus definitely indicates not only the end of the Papacy but a day of Judgment or the beginning of a new age.

PETRUS ROMANUS: *In the supreme desolation of the world, Peter the Roman will be enthroned.—last Pontiff of the True God. Criminal Rome will be destroyed and the Redoubtable Judge will judge his people.*

* * *

The April issue of the quarterly *Psychic Science,* now published by the newly formed International Institute for Psychic Investigation, contains a most interesting series of veridical dreams. As Mrs. Hewat Mackenzie, the editor, remarks, the dreams are exceptional because the same person appears in all of them and there is evidence of purpose.

Madame Dragoumis, the dreamer, who is now dead, states in a foreword written some years ago that the central figure of these nine dreams was a young man called Raoul D. who died of consumption and whom she never knew personally. His connection with her was through a close friend by whom he was deeply loved and whom he apparently loved in return though he had never spoken of it to her. The purpose of the dreams was evidently to bring comfort and faith to this mutual friend.

The dreams might be considered astral projections but Madame Dragoumis happily does not confuse the issue by making such a suggestion. In all but the ninth dream, she seems to have been aware of her whereabouts and of the fact that some purpose must be accomplished before she could awaken. She was also conscious of making a tremendous effort and in two of the dreams in which she sought but failed to find Raoul D., she experienced real disappointment and anguish. It is impossible to condense the context of these dreams but they illustrate several significant points.

As Madame Dragoumis had never met Raoul D. he cannot represent an emotional factor usually present in dreams. His conversation to her made it clear that she was merely an instrument by which he might reach the lady he loved. In the ordinary dream, the dreamer is usually placed in a more egotistical role. He also told her that she would remember every word that he said to her—which she apparently did because the accounts are most precise and detailed, containing names and statements afterwards verified, though unknown at the time to Madame Dragoumis. The reported conversations are extraordinarily lucid and logical and unlike usual dreams, suggesting steps in the evolution of the mind.

Madame Dragoumis recounts that she went to sleep very tired on this particular night, not expecting to dream of Raoul D.:

". . . I was rather astonished to find myself sitting beside him at the top of a magnificent hill, leaning against the trunk of a big tree. It was altogether strange scenery to me . . . Above us very high, there were shining glaciers, and very high up two enormous mountain-tops were for certain in the region of the snows . . .

" 'I did not know that I should see you,' I said, 'and I did not try to come.'

" 'Yes, I know,' he said, 'but you had need of repose and of the calm of this nature, and to enjoy with all the forces of your soul without being prevented by the fatigue of your body, and that is why I brought you here. You have been often enough in the cold and in the rain for our sake, and that is why I brought you here for your own sake in the most beautiful spot that I have ever known. . .'*

"At this moment my eyes fell on a little green branch that I was twisting in my fingers.

" 'You said just now,' I said slowly, 'that I was enjoying all this marvellous beauty without being influenced by my body, which is reposing at this moment in my room in Athens, but I beg you to explain to me what are the hands which hold this branch. See, I break it with my nail! Is it an optical illusion, and if so, with what eyes do I see this illusion I cannot understand?'

" 'No,' he said, 'you can't understand yet; you will only understand little by little, man being during his life subject to animal nature and only able to understand what he has observed or verified by facts. Besides that he can only guess; nevertheless the day will come when you will see in your spirit, though matter darkens much that is quite clear once you are here, near me.'

" 'For instance what?' I asked.

" 'Oh, I'll give you a quite simple example. Give me your hand,' and with the other pointing to a distant spot on the horizon, he asked me:

" 'How do they call that mountain to our left, and that one lower down which we scarcely see?'

" 'This one,' I answered, rather astonished at the question, 'is the Tronador, and further down the Minchinmavida.'

" 'And the highest of all these Andes of Patagonia,' he said, 'the one that is south of the Minchinmavida?'

" 'But it is the Corcovado, of course,' I answered.

" 'Very well,' he said smiling, 'and what is the lake whose water one scarcely sees down there in the valley?'

" 'It is the Nahuel Huapi.'

" 'Now look round us here,' and he put his hand on a big bush near us, whose flowers were white on the topmost branches and of a purplish tint on the lower ones. 'Smell it,' holding out to me one of the branches which he had cut off. It was a flower of a creamy

*The cold and the rain refers to the scenes of the former dreams, most of them in the city of Geneva, on drizzly nights. In a similar conversation in the sixth dream, Raoul D. spoke of the giant cedars around Lake Huapi in Patagonia, a place he had evidently visited during life and the setting of this dream.

white with a rather thick petal and with a very pleasant smell. 'What is it?' he asked.

" 'It's the flower of the quinquilla,' I answered.

" 'And it belongs to what family?'

" 'To the family of rubiacees.'

" 'And what is the botanical name of this plant in particular?'

"I looked at him with the same astonishment as though he was asking me the name of a rose or a daisy; nevertheless I answered mechanically, 'It is the Cinchona ovata.'

" 'Does one often meet this kind in these regions?' he asked again.

" 'But you know very well that one does not,' I said. 'It comes originally from Bolivia, and is only found in these latitudes because of the protected position of this plain.'

" 'And what other trees do you see around us?'

"I named hurriedly red cedars, giant laurels, myrtles of the Ecuador, and various others, not knowing exactly what he wanted to find out. At last he looked at me well in the eyes, smiling.

" 'Well, I can't say you are not well informed on the topography and on the flora of the Andes. You have doubtless studied these subjects thoroughly in your daily life.'

" 'You know very well that I have not,' I said, a little impatiently, 'but that I gather my knowledge from yours—considering the immensity of all which we have to learn and to understand spiritually, once we are free of matter it would be really very unfortunate if each of us were obliged to learn the interminable series of facts and names for himself, and that once the contact was established the science of one should not be the science of all.'

" 'Certainly,' he said, 'and this is my example. It all seems very clear to you now; are you quite sure not to find this transmission of knowledge very puzzling when you wake up to-morrow, and even a little miraculous?' And as I did not answer: 'But let us leave all this alone. You came here to rest your mind. . .' "

In considering this dream, it seems almost too detailed and perfect to be other than pure fiction and good fiction, too. Yet the fact is vouched for that Madame Dragoumis did not know the names of the mountains and flora of Patagonia before the dream and that she did know them afterward.

Book Review

PSYCHICAL EXPERIENCES. EVIDENCE OF PURPOSE.
By Zoë Richmond. Bell & Sons. 3/6.

What do we mean exactly by the word, Purpose? When we speak of purpose in natural phenomena, we mean the adaptation of means to ends; in this sense, purpose is obvious throughout the universe. When, however, we use the term in connection with human activity it implies more than this; it involves the recognition of directive and selective intelligence. It is with purpose in this extended sense that this book deals.

Every case rests on reliable testimony, the evidence has been sifted by critical researchers before it was placed in the archives of the London Society for Psychical Research. In these pages the reader is confronted with well authenticated facts, from which he can draw his own conclusions with the help of some sensible comments attached to each case.

In seeking to discover purpose in the field of research we are acting on strictly scientific principles. Physical discoveries, sometimes having important practical effects, have resulted from the careful observation by scientific men of natural phenomena indicative of purpose. For example, Harvey's discovery of the circulatory system of the blood was due to his observation that some of the valves in the veins were so placed as to give free passage of the blood to the heart, whilst others opposed the passage. His faith in nature, based on experience and reason, made him sure that there must be some purpose in this disposition of the valves. Those who are scientifically minded are compelled to be similarly observant in dealing with psychical phenomena. We may, therefore, assert without fear of contradiction, that the subject of this volume is of paramount importance in so far as it presents convincing evidence of intelligent purpose in the manifestations recorded. Moreover, if purpose is admitted in these communications from the "Dead", that fact *may* afford a clue which will perhaps help ultimately towards the solution of other perplexing aspects of psychical phenomena for which at present no sort of interpretation has been found.

The whole of this series, published with the consent of the council of the S. P. R. is valuable; but those who have no time (or think they have no time) to read more than one of the series would be wise to procure and study this volume of just over 100 pages. The author gives examples of cases under 3 different headings:

(1) Spontaneous apparitions, showing apparent intention.
(2) Impressions, showing purpose, that proved to be justified.
(3) Messages of a similar character through mediumistic methods.

In each case a few examples are given which only represent a very small percentage of available cases; they are well selected and deserve careful study.

In some preliminary remarks the author points out that in these cases there is evidence of intelligent purpose *beyond* the immediate satisfaction of the person concerned; there are indications, she writes, of some "power with intentions of its own", apart from the desire of the individual. These experiences "stir people's interest in another region of being" and lead to "development of the individual's personality". Those who have studied the progress of Psychical Research during the last 50 years in Britain, the United States, France and Italy are impressed by a sense of a purpose with a yet more extended and impersonal objective. In the larger scheme, incidents such as those recorded in this book have an integral part. As in a jig-saw puzzle the pieces, the details, figures of men and animals fulfil a minor purpose, complete in itself, and yet are factors in a bigger design. Thoughtful students are impelled to recognize the subordinate relation of personal experiences to a vaster purpose, directed by intelligence towards the enlightenment and progress of humanity as a whole.

The cases are too long to quote in full but as a sample a brief summary may be given of one. A man called James Chaffin made a will in 1905 leaving his estate to his third son only. Later he seems to have repented of this injustice and in 1919 he made another will which began as follows: "After reading the 27th Chapter of Genesis, I, James Chaffin, do make my last will and Testament". In this will he divided his property equally between his four children. This will he placed between two pages of an old family Bible, folding the pages over to make a kind of pocket. Chaffin died in 1921, but as this last will was not found, the other was acted on. In 1925 he appeared repeatedly to the second son in a dream, and at the last appearance spoke and informed him "You will find my will in my overcoat pocket". When the son awoke search was made in this coat and a little roll of paper was found tied with string, which contained only the following words, "Read the 27th Chapter of Genesis in my Daddy's old Bible". Thus the will was found and the injustice rectified.

At the close of the book a remarkable case is given of a communication at a family sitting at which an urgent entreaty was made that certain steps should be taken to prevent a disaster to a friend.

The warning was a failure; it was practically almost impossible to act on it and the disaster occurred. The author adds, "as a case of evident intention it stands out with special vividness perhaps because of its failure".

The final comment at the close of the volume contains some wise advice to those who may be over-eager to develop their psychic faculties.

Helen Alex. Dallas.